

Consolidating services may improve efficiency, but comes with headaches

By Anjeanette Damon, Las Vegas Sun

When times are tight, the cry for consolidated – read, cheaper – government services grows louder.

Witness North Las Vegas, on the brink of receivership, studying whether to consolidate everything from after-school programs to fire inspection services with Las Vegas.

Most recently, the two cities signed an agreement to consolidate their fire-training operations.

But consolidation isn't always a panacea for cash-strapped governments.

In fact, in what may be a cautionary tale for Southern Nevada governments exploring consolidation, Washoe County is working to free itself from a contract with Reno to provide fire-protection services.

Instead of saving the county money, commissioners say the opposite is occurring.

“We just can't afford to maintain the agreement that we currently have with the city of Reno,” Washoe County Commissioner John Breternitz said.

The two fire departments aren't technically consolidated. Rather, for the past 10 years, the county has contracted with Reno to provide fire protection services.

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